Emergency Dispatch Services

Fire Radio Procedures

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SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1   PURPOSE AND SCOPE
This document will cover policies and procedures that govern the communications of the Fire Service of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

    1.1.1   The purpose of this document is to provide a standardized policy and procedure manual so that **appropriate resources can be deployed in a timely and predictable manner.** Such standardized procedures will reduce time processing calls and dispatching units, reduce errors, and maximize efficiency of operations.

    1.1.2   This document is to be considered the outline of the policies and standard operating procedures for a variety of situations. It is obviously not intended to cover every conceivable situation. For circumstances that are not addressed in this manual, common sense and good judgment on the part of Emergency Dispatch Services (EDS) supervisor will prevail.

    1.1.3   The need for standardization is imperative with such a large volume of Fire and Rescue calls that continue to rise annually. This SOP will save time, minimize confusion, eliminate errors, and will assist all concerned in providing a timely and predictable reaction to emergency situations.

1.2   CHANGES AND REVISIONS
It is imperative that all services keep this manual up to date at all times. All changes and revisions will follow the process listed below.

    1.2.1   Any organization or individual desiring changes which effect the Fire and Rescue communications, or which modify, supplement, or require action not covered by this publication, shall forward a request to the radio committee of the Montgomery County Fire Chief's Association. After review, the committee shall forward the recommendations to EDS through the Assistant Director of Operations.

    1.2.2   In cases where action on the part of EDS is required, EDS is responsible for implementing procedure revisions considered necessary to internal operations.

    1.2.3   Approved changes will be published with the new date and distributed to all users of the manual.

    1.2.4   The Fire Radio Committee will serve as the "appeals board" to hear and attempt to resolve issues related to officers or unit radio designation or other relevant issues. Requests should be in writing, signed by the chief, stating reason for review. Recommendation will be forwarded to the EDS Assistant Director of Operations if warranted.

SECTION 2.0

FREQUENCY ALLOCATIONS

2.1   **Low Band F-1 (33.70)** will be used as the dispatch frequency by most low band companies operating on the EDS system.

    2.1.1   **Low Band (33.44)** will be the dispatch frequency for Pottstown Fire Department.

    2.1.2   **Low Band (33.84)** will be the dispatch frequency for the fire companies in Lower Merion Township and Narberth Borough.

2.2   **Low Band F-2 (33.66)** will be the operating frequency or hailing channel for Montgomery County low band fire companies.

2.3   **Low Band Tac-3 (33.60)** will be used as a tactical channel and for fire police operations by all companies operating on the EDS system. Use of F-3 for a fire ground frequency shall be cleared through EDS before emergency or non-emergency use. This will eliminate the possibility of interference. Fire Police responding to an emergency call will use this frequency for unit to unit radio traffic. This can be done without having to clear the channel usage with EDS. Fire Police requests and messages for EDS will be done on F-2.

2.4   **Low Band Tac-4 (33.76)** may be used as a tactical operating channel or training channel. This channel is not monitored by EDS. If used for an incident, contact must be maintained with EDS through a channel assigned by EDS. Use of this channel for a training exercise shall be approved by EDS prior to training to eliminate the possibility of interference.

2.5   **Low Band Tac-5 (33.58)** may be used as a tactical operating channel or training channel. This channel is not monitored by EDS. If used for an incident, contact must be maintained with EDS through a channel assigned by EDS. Use of this channel for a training exercise shall be approved by EDS prior to training to eliminate the possibility of interference.

2.6   **Low Band Tac-6 (33.54)** may be used as a tactical operating channel or training channel. This channel is not monitored by EDS. If used for an incident, contact must be maintained with EDS through a channel assigned by EDS. Use of this channel for a training exercise shall be approved by EDS prior to training to eliminate the possibility of interference.

2.7   **Low Band Tac-7 (33.46)** may be used as a tactical operating channel or training channel. This channel is not monitored by EDS. If used for an incident, contact must be maintained with EDS through a channel assigned by EDS. Use of this channel for a training exercise shall be approved by EDS prior to training to eliminate the possibility of interference.

2.8 **High Band F-1 (154.130)** will be used as the general dispatch frequency by most high band companies on the EDS system.

    2.8.1 **High Band (154.370)** will be the dispatch frequency for the Norristown Fire Department.

    2.8.2 **High Band (154.445)** will be the dispatch frequency for the fire companies in Cheltenham Township.

2.9 **High Band F-2 (154.280)** will be the operating frequency or hailing channel for Montgomery County high band fire companies.

2.10 **High Band Tac-3 (153.380)** may be used as a tactical operating channel or training channel. This channel is not monitored by EDS. If used for an incident, contact must be maintained with EDS through a channel assigned by EDS. Use of this channel for a training exercise shall be approved by EDS prior to training to eliminate the possibility of interference.

2.11 Other frequencies, high and low, which EDS classifies as "LOCALS" are used by several fire companies to conduct their fireground operations. EDS encourages this use as long as they maintain communications with the dispatcher at all times on the hailing channel or in some cases their dispatch channel. The dispatcher at their discretion may assign the company frequency to maintain communications. A recommended use of the local frequencies is during "Priority Traffic Conditions."

2.12 The F-1 Channel (33.70 & 154.130) will still be monitored by EDS. Although these channels should be used for dispatching only, a unit can use the channel to call in a priority message if they are unable to get through on F-2. In extreme instances, responding units could be directed to operate on F-1 by County dispatchers. These instances would only be if there was a problem with the F-2 channel. Only the County can direct that operations be moved to the F-1 channel.

2.13 If a fire company receives another emergency call while they are operating on F-2 or a Tac channel, the OIC of the particular fire company will be advised on F-2 of the call. After a company goes available with the County all future calls will go back to normal dispatch on the F-1 channel.

2.14 It is not necessary for calls to be acknowledged by the station. If a company maintains an internal procedure for acknowledging the dispatch on a base station, utilize Hailing Channels.

SECTION 3.0

CONTROL OF COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS

3.1 Standard operating procedures should be used for handling messages by radio or telephone. Use of standard operating procedures will conserve air time and permit accurate, brief, and rapid transmission of essential information. Careless procedure and the lack of radio discipline cause delay, confusion, and unnecessary transmissions.

3.2 EDS will be responsible for maintaining frequency discipline, for handling radio and telephone messages rapidly, for determining order of priority for which transmissions are to be made, and for directing and controlling the use of all radios.

3.3 Use of frequencies shall be limited to communications essential to the conduct of official fire and rescue activities. Under the rules of the Federal Communications Commission it is unlawful:

    3.3.1 To transmit or send superfluous signals or messages of a personal nature.

    3.3.2 To use profane, indecent, or obscene language.

    3.3.3 To willfully damage or permit radios to be damaged.

    3.3.4 To cause unlawful or malicious interference with other radio or dispatch communications.

    3.3.5 To intercept and use or publish the contents of any radio or dispatch messaging without the expressed written permission of the proper authority.

    3.3.6 To make or send unnecessary or unidentified transmissions.

    3.3.7 To transmit without first making sure that the transmissions will not cause harmful interference to other radio users.

    3.3.8 To make adjustments, repairs or alterations whatsoever to a communication transmitter. Only a communication technician, holding a general radio/telephone license or higher, may make adjustments and repairs.

    3.3.9 To deny access to any radio equipment if a properly identified representative of the FCC asks to inspect it. The equipment must be available for inspection at any reasonable time.

    3.3.10 To transmit a call signal, letter, or numerical which has not been assigned.

Upon conviction for any of the above offenses, the Federal Communications Act of 1934 as amended provides for a penalty of not more than $10,000.00 fine and/or more than one (1) year imprisonment, or both for the first (1st) offense.

3.4 EDS will at all times retain responsibility for control of the use of frequencies used to conduct fire/rescue operations.

3.5 The IC can request that incident radio traffic be assigned to a tactical (TAC) channel. EDS will assign the requested TAC channel if available, or if not available, an alternate TAC channel. Dispatch will broadcast the change in assigned radio channel.

3.6 If radio traffic necessitates, EDS will prompt the IC and determine a TAC channel assignment.

3.7 When a channel is needed to land a helicopter, the dispatcher will advise the OIC of the channel to be used. It is understood that some companies will be using their LOCAL frequencies for the landing.

3.8 A **"PRIORITY TRAFFIC CONDITION"** will be utilized when there is a high volume of radio traffic or system use and conditions become congested.

    3.8.1 At times the volume of traffic, both radio and telephone, reaches a point where it nearly overloads the communications network and available dispatch personnel. (example: during thunderstorms, natural disasters, major incidents, or multiple emergencies occurring simultaneously). There is a definite need at such times for the dispatcher to maintain strict control over the situation to enable him or her to sort out priorities and ensure that vital information and calls are transmitted without delay or interruption.

    3.8.2 The "Priority Traffic Condition" will be instituted by radio with the following message: "Beep, Beep, Beep" "Attention all units, Montgomery County EDS is now operating under the Priority Traffic Condition." EDS will also alpha page over the COUNTYWIDE ALL CALL that a "Priority Traffic Condition" exists.

    3.8.3 When a "Priority Traffic Condition" exists, all unit to unit transmissions will be discontinued with the exception of emergency traffic and whenever possible, the OIC should advise of station or apparatus status changes rather than each individual unit doing so.

    3.8.4 The "Priority Traffic Condition" is not intended to cease transmissions by the OIC to EDS relative to the conditions of the call or orders to be relayed to responding apparatus.

    3.8.5 When "Priority Traffic Condition" is in effect, the following procedures may be followed:

        3.8.5.1 EDS will downgrade dispatches to a single company for certain calls during storms. Example: Automatic alarms, trees/wires calls, etc.

        3.8.5.2 Structural and rescue calls will continue to get a full response.

3.8.5.3 All downgraded calls will be forwarded for company's that are in service. Companies that are not in service, calls will be dispatched using normal procedure for that company.

3.8.5.4 Attempts should be made by companies to keep personnel in their stations during this time. Once someone is in the station, they will advise EDS that the station is manned. All downgraded calls will be given to the OIC by telephone or alpha pager.

3.8.5.5 EDS will call the station with non-emergency calls (investigations, etc.) if there is no apparatus or officer on radio. If apparatus or an officer is on radio, calls will be given directly to the unit.

3.8.5.6 Times will not be given by phone or radio during "Priority Traffic Condition" or under busy conditions.

3.8.6 The words "Operate Under Priority Traffic Condition" will be announced every half hour until the condition is lifted, at which time a message will be transmitted advising that the condition has been lifted. EDS will also alpha page over the County Wide All Call that the condition is CANCELED.

3.9 Under certain conditions, radio and telephone traffic conditions may become heavy enough to prevent immediate answers to radio calls. When this occurs, EDS may advise "all units stand-by". This means that EDS is temporarily unable to answer your message either because of heavy radio/telephone traffic or the need to dispatch another unit. Do not call again until answered unless you have a "priority emergency". If you have an emergency, state your unit designation and "**priority traffic**". Wait until acknowledged and then proceed with message. The use of "priority" will be restricted to the type of situation where life or personal injury is at stake or to a critical situation that requires immediate additional assistance. Once the heavy condition is alleviated, a message, "all units resume normal traffic" will be broadcast.

3.10 All fire/rescue personnel should continuously be aware of the need to conserve the use of radio frequencies and should strive to eliminate unnecessary use of the radio by using person to person communications, local channels (on scene) or using other available methods whenever feasible (example: residence telephone, cellular telephone, etc.).

SECTION 4.0

BASIC RULES FOR RADIO OPERATION

4.1   General

The manner in which radio operations are handled is often a measure of the efficiency of an organization and the attitude of its individuals. Observing simple basic rules will expedite message handling and improve working relationships among all concerned. Application of general guidelines outlined here will lead to professional performance.

4.1.1   Listen before transmitting to make certain the channels are clear and organize your thoughts before transmitting.

4.1.2   Keep all transmissions brief and to the point. Avoid longwinded descriptions and unnecessary repetition. Accuracy, brevity, and speed are all important; however, they should be considered in that order.

4.1.3   Speak distinctly and pronounce words carefully. Speak at a moderate speed using your conversational tone of voice with emphasis and rhythm. A message should be spoken by phrases, not one word at a time.

4.1.4   When using a portable/mobile radio, hold the microphone about one inch from your lips, press the microphone button down firmly and then speak slowly and clearly across the mouthpiece in a normal voice. Do not hold the microphone directly in front of your mouth, but slightly to the side at an angle of about forty-five degrees so that you can talk across the face of the microphone instead of "blowing" into it.

4.1.5   From a cold start, different radios require varying amounts of warm up time. Be aware of this and allow for the radio to stabilize before attempting to transmit.

4.1.6   Avoid transmitting when audible emergency warning devices are operating.

4.1.7   Use official titles and authorized apparatus designations in all transmissions. Do not use nicknames or first names.

4.1.8   During all radio operations, remain cordial and calm. Words or voice inflections which reflect an individual's irritation, disgust or sarcasm are not to be used. Remember, your conduct on the radio reflects your entire company.

4.1.9   No one company or emergency should overrun the radio. Remember, there can be any number of emergencies going on at one time.

4.1.10 Base stations or individual companies in service should not monopolize the airtime with unnecessary transmissions or "blow by blow" descriptions. Remember, your company is not the only one that might be in service in the County.

4.1.11 DO NOT use preliminary calls simply to establish contact. When advising that a unit is responding, on location, or all units are available from the scene, identify yourself and give your message in a single transmission.

4.1.12 The use of thanks, please, and other expressions of courtesy are unnecessary and should not be used.

4.1.13 When you are finished using the microphone, secure it in a proper position to avoid an "open mike" which could be very damaging to essential and emergency radio traffic.

SECTION 5.0

COMMUNICATIONS ORDER MODEL

5.1   Under normal conditions, it is not necessary for mobile units to call and wait for acknowledgment before transmitting short messages, such as, responding or on location. However, in advance of sending a lengthy message, make a preliminary call and await acknowledgment before proceeding. The identifying words "County" should be used when calling EDS. The message should start with "County" followed by your unit number. (For example: County from Chief 27).

5.2   When responding to incidents, each apparatus and officer for that apparatus should advise that they are responding, example, "Engine 27-2 responding". This message can be given directly without waiting for an acknowledgment from EDS. Only the responding apparatus and first chief of each station will be acknowledged by EDS. The exception to this rule would be the acknowledgment of an officer that is higher in rank than the first responding or on location officer. When arriving on location, only the first arriving apparatus will be acknowledged by EDS.

   5.2.1   First responding and arriving fire marshal will be acknowledged.

5.3   When multiple officers are responding in one unit or in personal vehicles, only the highest ranking officer should be announced as responding with that unit or vehicle.

5.4   The first officer or apparatus arriving on location shall advise EDS of their arrival and report information of value to other incoming units. (See section 8)

5.5   Fire police personnel and units (vehicles) will advise that they are responding on F-2. They will not be acknowledged. The only exception to this, will be when the fire police are specially called, at which time the first out unit should advise they are responding on F-2 and will be acknowledged.

5.6   When apparatus is relaying information to EDS from an officer, it should be stated as such in their message. For example: "County from Engine 27 by orders of Chief 27, dispatch the second alarm". Also, if EDS is calling an officer and the apparatus is answering for him, they should make that fact clear. For example: "County from Engine 27 proceed with your message for Chief 27."

5.7   There is no need to advise EDS that units are "available by radio" for driver training, fuel, parades, etc., either by phone or radio. The only time that EDS is to be made aware of this fact, is when it would change the dispatch procedure of the station or necessitate a special procedure, at which time the OIC should advise EDS by phone or fax.

5.8   Individual apparatus or officers returning to station or available from a scene need not advise EDS of such, unless it will cancel a special procedure or release a stand-by company, at which time EDS should be advised of this fact.

5.9 When a fire marshal remains on scene to conduct an investigation the incident will remain open until the fire marshal is available.

5.10 "Plain speak" will be utilized. "10" codes will not be used. The phrase "ok" will be used to signify acknowledgement.

SECTION 6.0

TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

6.1   General

    6.1.1   The calltaker and/or dispatcher will be responsible to obtain as much information as possible from the caller. This would include the correct address, specific location, nature of emergency, caller's name, number they are calling from and any other pertinent information. Sometimes due to language barriers, emotions, phone problems, and any array of other possibilities, it is impossible to get the required information.

    6.1.2   9-1-1 calls will be answered "9-1-1, what is your emergency."

    6.1.3   Incoming calls on non-911 emergency lines or on the FIRE/EMS Business lines will be answered "Fire and EMS, Dispatcher #_____."

    6.1.4   Whenever calling EDS, whether on business or for an emergency, identify yourself, stating your name and the station that you are with, or use your assigned designation.

    6.1.5   All calls to EDS of a business nature will be done ONLY on the administrative line. The emergency number(s) are NOT to be used. The administrative lines numbers are as follows:

> Main # (610) 539-8770 *
> County-Wide Toll Free 1-800-352-1800
> Shift Supervisor (Direct)   (610) 631-6541
> Alarm Companies (To report Alarms) 610-539-6262

    * The (610) 539-8770 number shall be used by all fire/rescue personnel unless the call is a toll call. The toll free line shall then be used under those circumstances listed above. The administrative lines are ONLY for use of fire and rescue personnel. They are NOT to be given to the public !

    6.1.6   The line to the supervisor is the telephone line you must use to talk to the on duty supervisor. The other business lines shall not be used for this purpose.

    6.1.7   9-1-1 is only to be used to report a true emergency. 9-1-1 is not to be used by fire/rescue personnel for updates or call information.

6.2   Obtaining Information

    6.2.1   The telecommunicator must obtain information as quickly as possible. Time is critical. We cannot expect that a person will remain in a burning building to answer all of our questions. After obtaining critical information (location what is on fire, occupancy) the caller should be advised to leave the structure and go to a

safe area. If additional information is needed, the caller can be advised to call back from a neighbors phone or a cell phone.

SECTION 7.0

DISPATCH PROCEDURES

7.1   The order that the tones are activated and the order that the companies are announced in the dispatch will be made in the same order as the companies that are due to respond. Pre-alert will be used for building and dwelling fires and rescues.

Procedure for voice dispatch:

7.1.0   Pre-alert – Quick beep, municipality, address, type (Building/Dwelling /Rescue) Example: Trappe Borough, 123 Main St. a_____ .

7.1.1   Activate tone or tones.

7.1.2   Announce the stations and or units that are due to respond.

7.1.3   Announce the type of call (see 7.16).

7.1.4   Announce the location of the call.

7.1.5   Announce the name at the residence if known.

7.1.6   Announce the cross streets (only when repeating the Dispatch).

7.1.7   Announce the box number, section or complex if known.

7.1.8   Announce the municipality.

7.1.9   Repeat steps 7.1.2 through 7.1.8.

7.1.10   Announce that the units operate on Fire Region.

7.1.11   Announce the dispatch time.

7.1.12   If in effect, announce, "Priority Traffic Condition".

Procedure for alpha/numeric dispatch.

7.1.13   Address of call.

7.1.14   Township or county of call.

7.1.15   Fire company box number, map page, or town code (ADC Map).

7.1.16   Nature of call.

7.1.17   Apparatus assigned to call.

7.1.18   Cross streets.

7.1.19   Incident number.

7.1.20   Any additional notes received prior to dispatch.

7.1.21   Lock box and Hazard information.

7.2   Any <u>additional</u> information pertaining to the dispatch, such as entrance to use, numerous phone calls reporting the same incident, protected area for alarm calls, etc. will be given to the first out officer and/or responding apparatus. Relevant information is also to be provided to the fire marshal.

7.3   In rare cases when the dispatchers' best judgment indicates that additional equipment will be needed on the initial alarm, than that which is shown on the procedure, he will check with the shift supervisor for authority to send additional apparatus.

7.4   If a company that is already in service gets another call in their first run area and they have no cover up company, the OIC will be contacted by radio and advised of the second call. He shall then advise EDS if his company will handle the call or if another company should be dispatched. If the OIC does not answer, the zone company will be dispatched per procedure.

7.5   If a company that is already in service gets another call in their first run area and they have a cover up company, the zone company and cover up company will be dispatched. After the cover up company has been dispatched, the OIC of the zone company will also be notified.

7.6   When a company is going to be out of service, for whatever reason, and they are going to have a cover up company, it shall be the responsibility of the OIC of the cover up company to advise EDS of the method of dispatch for his company. The OIC of the company going out of service will also advise EDS if he wants any tones activated or any notification via alpha.

7.7   When a company from an adjacent county, or a company on a frequency that EDS does not have the capability to transmit on, is called for in the procedure, it will be noted in the dispatch, so the OIC is aware that the proper companies are being dispatched. Example: "Station 27 and Bucks County, Station 29."

7.8   An incident number is assigned to calls that are entered into CADS. This includes pump details, assist police, animal calls, etc. Only one complaint will be generated for an incident no matter how large or small. Rekindles will be entered as a new complaint if all units have returned to the station from the previous call at the same location. If a fire station or fire officer is requesting tones be activated for a special service, or if a company is self dispatching to any type of call that would normally get an incident number, the caller must provide EDS will all necessary information.

7.9 If for any reason no verbal response is received from a company within five minutes after the dispatch, the dispatcher shall response check the company in question on both the dispatch and hailing channels. If no response is received, the company shall be re-dispatched. The next due company will be dispatched and the original company's tones will be dispatched from a different tower site. A response would include any type of message indicating that the tones have activated the proper equipment with the dispatch.

  7.9.1 When companies are dispatched with specific pieces of apparatus using the "Box" system the same time frame as 7.9 above will be used. If no response is received from the unit(s), the OIC of the incident will be notified that a specific unit(s) is not responding. THERE WILL NOT BE A REDISPATCH OF THAT UNIT(S).

7.10 If a company is dispatched to assist another company that is operating on a frequency other than their hailing frequency, or if EDS wants all of the units being dispatched to operate on a frequency other that F-2 or a zone frequency, the following message will be added to the dispatch. "All units will operate on TAC ____". Responding units shall maintain communications on their hailing channel until going on location and then switch to the assigned TAC channel.

7.11 When a call is received and the caller states that the fire is out, the dispatcher will dispatch the normal response for a fire at the location immediately. The dispatcher will not state that the fire is out with the dispatch, but will advise the first officer of the zone company when he advises that he is responding.

  7.11.1 In some circumstances it will be obvious that there is no actual fire emergency. In those cases, dispatchers may, with the supervisors consent, dispatch the call as an investigation.

7.12 When a fire alarm or water flow alarm is received and there is a report that it was set off by accident, caused by burnt food, set off by workers, a tamper switch, etc., the call will be dispatched using the "Investigation" procedure for the company. In some instances only the OIC and the fire marshal will be notified. No fire alarm or water flow alarm will be disregarded.

7.13 Normal requests for fire police will be handled per the procedure of the requested company or companies.

  7.13.1 If for any reason no response is received from a fire police unit within ten minutes after the dispatch, the dispatcher shall response check the fire police unit in question on the dispatch and hailing channels. If no response is received from a fire police unit, the original department that requested the fire police shall be notified that the requested fire police unit did not respond. A response would include any type of message indicating that the tones or alpha pager have activated the proper equipment with the dispatch. THERE WILL BE NO REDISPATCH FOR FIRE POLICE.

7.14 Following are the codes used for dispatch:

ACC	Accident
ACI	Accident with injuries
AL	Alarm
ALS	Medical - ALS
BLS	Medical - BLS
CM	Carbon monoxide detector
CO	Commercial building
FP	Fire police
HMI	Haz-Mat inside
HMO	Haz-Mat outside
IN	Investigation
NB	Non building
NCO	Non commercial building
RE	Rescue
REN	Elevator rescue-no EMS
REW	Water rescue

WEEK DAY CODES (Monday thru Friday 0600 thru 1800 hours)

WAC	Accidents
WAI	Accident with injuries
WAL	Alarm
WCO	Commercial building
WNB	Non building
WNC	Non commercial building
WRE	Rescue
WRW	Water rescue

7.15 Following is the list of nature codes:

FAL	Fire alarm
FBC	Commercial building
FBN	Non commercial building
FCM	Carbon monoxide detector
FDF	Debris/fluids on highway
FEL	Elevator rescue
FEO	Electrical outside
FFP	Fire police
FGI	Gas leak inside
FGO	Gas leak outside
FHL	Helicopter standby or landing
FHM	Haz-Mat
FIN	Investigation
FIR	Fire - general
FLV	Leaves
FPD	Pump detail
FRE	Rescue - other than vehicle or water
FRW	Rescue - water
FSB	Stand-by
FSS	Special service
FTR	Trash/dumpster

FUN	Unknown type fire
FVE	Vehicle
FVL	Vehicle leaking fluids
FWF	Field/woods
PLC	Plane Crash
TRC	Train Crash
VAF	Fire police for vehicle accident
VAI	Vehicle accident with injuries
VAM	Vehicle accident with motorcycle
VAP	Vehicle accident with pedestrian
VAR	Vehicle accident with rescue
VAS	Vehicle accident standby

7.16 The following terms will be the terminology used for dispatch:

7.16.1 Building fires - any industrial, institutional, or commercial type building, multi-family including apartment buildings. Medium to high hazard occupancies.

7.16.2 Dwelling fire - any noncommercial type building used as a residence, including single-family, garages, sheds and out buildings.

7.16.3 Appliance – small equipment that can be carried out of a structure (example: television, toaster).

7.16.4 Fire alarm - announce type if known, water flow, automatic alarm, or manual alarms

7.16.5 CO alarm - carbon monoxide alarm

7.16.6 Vehicle - any type of vehicle

7.16.7 Outside trash - any type of trash, rubbish, or dumpsters

7.16.8 Outside electrical - any type of wires, poles, transformers

7.16.9 Electrical inside - any type of wires and odors of electrical

7.16.10 Odor of gas outside - any types of gas odors outside, including propane tanks.

7.16.11 Odor of gas inside - any type of gas odors inside

7.16.12 Accident with injuries

7.16.13 Stand-by at an accident - for calls that the police request the fire company to stand-by for hazard control

7.16.14 Debris (or fluids) on the roadway

7.16.15 Hazardous materials box–spill, leak or release of a hazardous chemical or substance other than small vehicle fuel tank

7.16.16 Investigation - any type of investigation of a hazardous condition, (example: flooded basement).

7.16.17 Brush - includes grass, mulch, fields, woods, trees, etc.

7.16.18 Special service - assist EMS or police.

7.16.19 Rescue - vehicle, water, residential, industrial, confined space, trench, high angle, elevator.

7.16.20 Stand-by at station - used for requests for cover up from your fire station.

7.16.21 Relocate – used for requests for cover up company to move to another fire station.

7.16.22 Helicopter landing - used for direct fly of helicopters.

7.16.23 Stand-by for possible helicopter landing - used when helicopters are placed on stand-by.

7.16.24 System alert – a critical event or system failure or shutdown may occur.

7.17 Extra Alarms

7.17.1 Requests from the IC for assistance can be made as "special calls" or as additional alarms, i.e. "transmit the 2nd alarm".

7.17.2 Available units on the box card will be used to "fill in" the additional alarm.

7.18 Box System

7.18.1 The box system designates areas or zones within each departments respective jurisdiction, sometimes referred to as their "local". The assigned box number utilizing the assigned municipality identifies and the zone within that municipality, provides for easy identification of the geographic area of the incident. This allows for identification of a area map, area resource list and a basis for deploying the nearest appropriate resource (fire or EMS unit).

7.18.2 The use of the box system requires that response assignments be predetermined. Boxes are categorized as Local Box, Tactical box, Rescue Box, HazMat Box and Specials Calls.

7.18.3 Municipalities or fire companies will determine the appropriate response to alarms in their jurisdictions. The following is listed as a guidance based on the

National Fire Protection Association, Fire Protection Handbook. It is assumed that apparatus will be appropriately staffed.

High Hazard Occupancies – Box
At least 4 engines, 2 ladder trucks, 2 chief officers, and other specialized apparatus as may be needed to cope with the combustible involved. Includes: multiple story buildings, target hazards, institutions, etc.

Medium Hazard Occupancies – Tactical Box
At least 3 engines, 1 ladder truck, 1 chief officer and other specialized apparatus as may be needed or available. Includes: dwellings, chimneys, heaters, etc.

Local – Single unit response. Includes: vehicles, grass, fuel spills, etc.

NOTE: In accordance with recognized "best practices" this department advocates and highly recommends using the closest available apparatus according to miles traveled.

7.18.4 This department will assist any fire department interested in making changes to their box system. Contact the Assistant Director for Information and Data for assistance and guidance.

SECTION 8.0

FIREGROUND COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS – ORDER MODEL

8.1   The first arriving unit shall advise of arrival and provide a brief description of conditions.

    8.1.1   Example: Engine 21 on location. This is a (describe structure), describe conditions observed i.e. "heavy smoke showing, second floor".

    8.1.2   Standard terminology includes: nothing showing, light smoke, heavy smoke, fire showing, fully involved.

    8.1.3   Non-structural nature and condition reports can simply confirm dispatch information, i.e. "on location, we have a small brush fire".

  8.2   Use of adopted ICS will be the standard operating procedure for Montgomery County.

8.3   When EDS receives an initial report, it will be rebroadcast for all responding units on both the dispatch and hailing channel. For example: "Beep" all units responding to_____, from Chief 27, light smoke showing. The report will also be sent over the alpha pagers. The report will be announced once. If the same report is given by other arriving units, IT WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCED. If the report was not received from the OIC of the first due company, he should acknowledge that he received the report. If he does not acknowledge, he will be called once to make sure that he did in fact receive it.

8.4   The IC after sizing up/assessing the situation should make a more detailed report to EDS giving any and all pertinent information available. For example: how much of the building is actually involved (one room, one floor, etc.), what is actually involved (pot of food, chair, light ballast, etc.), if chemicals are involved, what you think the problem is, etc.

8.5   The IC should periodically keep EDS advised of the situation and progress. For example: If evacuation is in progress, any roads that are going to be closed for a long period of time, when the fire is under control or out, when rescue is complete, etc. EDS may from time to time contact the IC for an update. When a message is received that the fire is under control or out or that rescue is complete, the time will be recorded on the complaint and the benchmark, broadcast, i.e. "Fire under control at 17:20 hours".

8.6   On all **working building fires, rescues, hazardous material incidents, and closures of limited access highways**, the IC will be given a "Twenty Minute Mark" check by EDS. The IC will update the EOC with information about the call. This will continue every twenty minutes until the fire is placed under control, rescue is complete, or the IC advises to discontinue the checks.

8.7 When a request is received to "Reduce Speed" of incoming units, the following format will be used:

    8.7.1 If all units are to reduce speed - "Beep, all units responding to (location), reduce speed". Do not repeat

    8.7.2 If all units are to reduce speed with the exception of a specific unit or units "Beep, all units responding to (location) with the exception of (specific unit or units), reduce speed". Do not repeat.

    8.7.3 If all units are to reduce speed and units still at station are to remain at station - "Beep, all units reduce and hold". Do not repeat.

NOTE: The above requests will be broadcast over the dispatch and hailing channels and also on the alpha pagers.

8.8 When a request is received to "Recall" units, the following format will be used:

    8.8.1 If all units are to recall - "Beep, Beep, all units responding to (location), recall". Do not repeat.

    8.8.2 If units are to recall with the exception of specific unit or unites "Beep, Beep, all units responding to (location) with the exception of (specific unit or units), recall". Do not repeat.

NOTE: The above requests will be broadcast over the dispatch and hailing channels and also on the alpha pagers.

    8.8.3 After EDS transmits the recall order, they will call the IC of each company recalled, pausing after calling the IC to allow him to acknowledge the recall and make all his units available. If no officer has responded from a company, then the first apparatus that responded will be called and they will give the acknowledgment and make all their units available. Individual units should not make themselves available unless it will cancel a special procedure or releases a stand-by company. The only time EDS should be advised of units returning is when the last apparatus is returning from each station and the message should be given by the IC. When a company is recalled, at no time will EDS make a company available without notification from the IC or an apparatus that the company is available. Fire marshals will make themselves available.

    8.8.4 When a company becomes available; it will be repeated, "Station 00 available 0000 hours". When more than one company becomes available at the same time, acknowledge units together. i.e.:. Station 84/85 available 0000 hours.

8.9 The steady alert (beep) will be used in the following manner:

    8.9.1 One Beep - will be used when repeating the first in report or giving special instructions to incoming units. This would also be used when repeating the order

to reduce speed or advising units to remain at station. It will also be used for announcements (Apparatus "out of service" or "back in service", weather warnings, course cancellations, etc.).

8.9.2 One Long Beep – will be used for pre-alert and announcing drills

8.9.3 Two Beeps - will be used when repeating the order to recall.

8.9.4 Three Quick Beeps - will be used if a unit does not answer after repeated attempts to contact them. Also will be used when activating or canceling "priority traffic condition".

8.10 Benchmark:
When the IC places the incident under control, announce:

Fire: Fire is under control on Box/Location _____ or Tactical Box _____ at time_____.

HazMat: Incident is under control on HazMat Box/Location _____or Tactical Box _____at _____time _____.

Extrication: Rescue complete on Rescue Box/Location _____ at time_____.

All Clear: May be used by IC to benchmark completion of search. Announce All Clear on Box/Location _____ or Tactical Box _____ at time_____.

SECTION 9.0

ANNOUNCEMENTS

9.1   When apparatus is placed "Out of Service" or "Back in Service", EDS will be notified by phone. EDS will then announce accordingly on the appropriate frequency or frequencies at that time. For example:

    9.1.1   Apparatus going out of service - Several short beeps, "Attention all companies, Engine 27 is now out of service (time)".

    9.1.2   Apparatus going back in service - "Attention all companies, Engine 27 is now back in service (time)".

    9.1.3   The out of service will be broadcasted at 0800 & 1900 hrs each day, preceded by beep.

9.2   When EDS receives a request for the dispatch of an assist company or companies, the requesting party shall be advised of any apparatus that is out of service from that company or companies before the dispatch.

9.3   When weather warnings are received, they will be broadcast over all frequencies and on the alpha pagers. The broadcast times will be when the alerts are received, no matter what time of day. Weather watches will not be broadcast. (Dispatchers use A-2 tone).

9.4   Other announcements such as: training notices, course cancellations, storm related messages, etc. will be broadcast on all frequencies and alpha pagers as needed.   Routine messages will be broadcast after 0800 hr and prior to 2000 hrs.

9.5   Funeral broadcasts will be limited to line of duty fatalities. Other announcements will be done through paging system or printers.

SECTION 10.0

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

10.1   Changes in procedures can be requested by an officer when caused by weather or road conditions, banquets, equipment breakdowns, special occasions, or special hazards.

> **10.1.1** Special procedures will be accepted by phone, fax, or e-mail to the Assistant Director of Operations during normal business hours or to the EDS Supervisor after hours. Acceptable temporary changes include but not limited to: training nights when the company is out of their first due area for a few hours, equipment or vehicle breakdowns, requests for 4 wheel drive vehicles to assist EMS during severe weather conditions, etc. If these special procedures were given by phone, they will be considered temporary until EDS receives supporting documentation. If the documentation is not received by the end of the next business day, the procedure will be removed. This information can be faxed, mailed, or hand delivered. When the special procedure is to be removed, documentation will be needed and the procedure will be removed from the CADS the next business day.

10.2   All other changes or updates for procedures, geographical information, landmark changes and telephone number changes shall be mailed or faxed to EDS. Lengthy or multiple changes are better mailed. A "single" change is acceptable via FAX.

FAX Number:
> (610)631-6539

Mailing Address:
> Assistant Director of Operations
> Montgomery County EDS
> 50 Eagleville Road
> Eagleville, PA 19403

10.3   All requests received for fire, police or EMS services will be complied when requested by any fire or recognized public safety official. If there is a discrepancy or conflict with resources, dispatched it will be addressed with the requesting official and the agencies involved.

SECTION 11.0

COMPLAINTS AND TAPE REQUESTS

11.1   The fire chief or a municipal fire marshal may make a verbal complaint to EDS after an incident occurs. This should be done by calling the Assistant Director of Operations during business hours at (610) 631-6516. Where a complaint can't wait because time is of essence, the Shift Supervisor may be called at (610)631-6541 (after hours). Complaints are never to be made to dispatchers. If a Shift Supervisor receives a complaint but cannot handle due to workload, the complainant will be instructed to call the Assistant Director of Operations. All complaints shall be documented for staff review and corrective action where necessary.

11.2   The fire chief, municipal fire chief, or municipal fire marshal may send by mail or fax a complaint to the Assistant Director of Operations. After being reviewed by the Assistant Director of Operations, a written response with the results will be sent to the chief.

11.3   Continuous recordings are made of all primary radio channels and telephone lines at EDS. These tapes are kept for approximately 30 days, unless it is requested in writing that they be held for a longer period of time.

11.4   All requests for records must be complete with the appropriate signed form and an original subpoena, and submitted to EDS, in accordance with Section 2.12 of the EDS Division S.O.P. These requests must be signed by the fire chief, or fire marshal.

SECTION 12.0

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT EQUIPMENT

12.1   Field Communications Unit (Field Comm. 1)

Field Comm.1 is available to all Public Safety agencies of Montgomery County for response to, but not limited to, the following types of incidents.

Multiple alarm fires, major transportation accidents (highway, railroad, aircraft), hazardous material incidents, mass evacuations, natural disasters, and multi-agency responses to an incident which the incident commander requires communications coordination. It is also available for preplanned events, depending on staff availability.

12.2   When Field Comm. 1 is on the scene, it will not use "Command" as it's identifier, unless the Incident Commander is in Field Comm.1. For example: 27 COMMAND OR ANYTOWN COMMAND will be used when the Incident Commander is commanding the incident from Field Comm. 1, otherwise it will be Field Comm. 1.

12.4   The radios in the Field Comm. 1 are programmed with most frequencies used in the County and surrounding Counties. Additional frequencies can be programmed on the scene if needed. Additional equipment carried on Field Comm. 1, include cell phones, fax machine, and copier.

12.5   Tech Support I

   12.5.1 This vehicle is equipped with extra radios, mobile repeater, and an ACU 1000 (interoperability equipment). It is dispatched with the on call communication technician.

   12.5.2 It is available for emergencies and pre-planned events, depending on staff availability .

SECTION 13.0

ALARM SYSTEM TESTING

13.1 General testing of pagers and siren decoders may be done provided there is no emergency radio traffic. This can be done by calling (610) 539-8770 or the toll free number.

13.2 Testing of station printers may be done as workload permits. This can be done by calling (610) 539-8770 or the toll free number.

SECTION 14.0

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

14.1 Hydrants, sprinkler systems, alarm systems out of service and street closings will be given to the officers and fire marshal responsible for that area via alpha pager.

    14.1.1 Notification will be between 0700 hrs and 2000 hrs.

14.2 Sprinkler systems and alarm systems being worked on or tested will be handled by EDS. The dispatcher will obtain a building name and address and also the name and phone number of the caller. This info will be entered into CADS as a "Caution Note" and will expire at midnight.

14.3 Informational calls for a fire company that are received by EDS will be given to the Chief or O.I.C. per fire company SOP.

14.4 Anytime that a multi-company preplan drill is going to be conducted where EDS will be involved, in any aspect, EDS must be notified of the particulars of the drill at least forty eight hours in advance. The information should be mailed or faxed to the Assistant Director of Operations (610-631-6539) and include the location, date, time, duration, and companies involved. Radio communications for the drill will be on Tac channels or a local channel. The use of any dispatch or hailing frequency is prohibited.

14.5 During normal operations, members of emergency services, community groups and other interested persons are encouraged to visit the EOC to observe the operations. These tours should be setup with the Assistant Director of Operations (610) 631-6516 at least five days before they are to take place and are limited to a maximum of fifteen people. All visitors to the EOC are to use the main entrance and must sign the security log, which is located in the reception area. The shift supervisor shall have full authority to prohibit visitors, or to curtail a tour that is in progress at any time to maintain the efficient operation of the EOC. All visitors shall be warned of the need to curtail conversations when transmitters are broadcasting or telephone messages are being received. No visitors will be allowed to have weapons, and cell phones and Nextel's must be off.

14.6 Any automatic dial alarm terminating at EDS shall be governed by the following regulations:

    14.6.1 The tape must include, but is not limited to, name of residence or business, street address number, municipality (borough or township) and closest intersection.

    14.6.2 It must dial the correct TEN digit emergency number (610) 539-6262.

    14.6.3 The use of 9-1-1 lines is prohibited for any dial alarm and/or any alarm reporting.

14.7 Requests for paging by EDS shall be limited to service related problems or a family emergency that cannot be handled by telephone calls. If the dispatcher feels the request does not qualify, the caller will be turned over to the shift supervisor for disposition. EDS reserves the right to curtail paging when necessary.

14.8 Addition or deletion of apparatus. EDS must be notified of any changes as soon as possible and must be in writing. Any changes in apparatus for your company may reflect in your dispatch procedure.

14.9 A list of company officers, name, rank, and telephone numbers, shall be provided to EDS after company elections and when personnel changes occur. The chief shall provide EDS with his/her mailing and email address.

14.10 In the event that any major element in the dispatch center is in failure, or in immediate danger of failing or a critical security event (internal or external to the EOC) is occurring all units will be advised of a "system alert." All stations should be staffed and units deployed from your station using back-up procedures as necessary.

    14.10.1 Order model: Beep, "a system alert is in effect". Do not telephone EDS for details.

SECTION 15.0

INCIDENT EVACUATION PLAN

15.1 A procedure to alert ALL personnel (Fire, EMS, Police, or Other) to evacuate an immediately unsafe building and/or incident area.

> **15.1.1** The Incident Commander activates the plan by broadcasting the incident identity, and all personnel to evacuate immediately. This will be directed by EDS or another dispatch center.
>
> #### ORDER MODEL
> "Command to EDS and all units operating at the
> NAMED incident "EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY"
>
> **15.1.2** Alert Tone - EDS will simultaneously rebroadcast this on all monitored potentially involved frequencies (Fire, Police, EMS, Other)and by the alpha pagers. This will be repeated in two minutes by the dispatcher. (Dispatchers: use A-4).
>
> **15.1.3** At plan implementation, ALL vehicle operators should sound their airhorn devices simultaneously and continuously for a fifteen second period.
>
> **15.1.4** Upon the command **"EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY",** all personnel should leave the affected area.
>
> **15.1.5** All officers responsible for personnel should take an immediate personal accountability report (PAR) accounting of their personnel and report to the Incident Commander.
>
> **15.1.6** The Evacuation plan should be used only for emergency evacuation, not just a change in strategy.
>
> **15.1.7** Upon the Incident Commander's decision to resume operations, it will be announced via radio with attention to EDS or other dispatch center.

SECTION 16.0

MONTGOMERY COUNTY INCIDENT COMMAND

16.1   COMMAND DESIGNATIONS

    16.1.1 On working incidents where an Incident Command post (CP) has been established, the IC shall "name" the incident. The name may be the company, i.e. "27 Command" or "Any town Command" or "Acme Command", etc. The lead agency will be responsible for naming the incident and **there will only be one recognized command** per incident. Other disciplines, operating on a fire scene, should consider designation as a "branch" or "division", i.e. HazMat Branch, EMS Branch, if they are not the lead agency.

16.2   ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

    16.2.1 Requests for additional resources shall be made through **COMMAND**. Any requests made by other individuals will be cleared through **COMMAND** before being dispatched. The only exception to this would be assist companies requesting a standby company.

16.3   The Montgomery County Incident Management System will be the SOP for emergency operations. The IC will designate sectors as needed, sector officers, branches, groups and divisions should communicate to the Incident Command Post. See the Montgomery County Incident Management System Plan for details.

SECTION 17.0

MAYDAY PROCEDURES

17.1 **<u>MAYDAY:</u>**   A nationally accepted term used when emergency services personnel are in immediate danger. The term will be used when a firefighter(s) finds themselves in any of the following situations:

    17.1.1 Low on air

    17.1.2 Lost in the building

    17.1.3 Trapped

    17.1.4 Overtaken by fire conditions

17.2 This term is used to gain immediate priority on the fireground.

17.3 Dispatch Procedure for a MAYDAY: The following procedure will be followed whenever a "MAYDAY" transmission is received from the fireground. The "MAYDAY" call can come from command or any unit operating on the fire scene.

    17.3.1 All non-MAYDAY related traffic will move to another radio frequency assigned by EDS. All transmissions on the MAYDAY channel shall cease until the "ALL CLEAR" is given by command.

    17.3.2 A second dispatcher will be assigned to assist with the incident, with one dispatcher dedicated to the MAYDAY operation.

    17.3.3 EDS will insure that two Fast Units are assigned and dispatch two additional ALS Ambulances.

    17.3.4 After the MAYDAY FAST TRACK ASSIGNMENT is dispatched, the IC will be notified. The IC can increase, reduce, or recall the Task Force as needed.

    17.3.5 If the dispatcher is unable to raise a command officer (i.e. may be incapacitated from explosion, etc), the dispatcher with the approval of the shift supervisor strike out an additional alarm.

17.4 Fireground procedure for a MAYDAY incident.

    17.4.1 Anytime emergency personnel on an incident feel they are trapped, injured, or lost, they shall signal a MAYDAY alert. Immediately following the MAYDAY signal, those personnel shall manually activate their PASS devices.

    17.4.2 They shall transmit the word "MAYDAY" via radio, announcing in increments of three "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY" followed by a radio message to command identifying themselves along with their location. Information

pertaining to the location should be as specific as possible (e.g. MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, Engine 27 portable to command, we are trapped inside the basement). This shall be repeated until acknowledged by either the Incident Commander or EDS. If the Incident Commander does not acknowledge the MAYDAY alert, EDS shall immediately relay this information to command.

17.4.3 Incident Commander shall deploy the necessary resources needed to assist with a rescue.

17.4.4 Upon the "MAYDAY" call, a Personal Accountability Report (PAR) shall be initiated for all other crews.

17.4.5 The F.A.S.T. Team shall notify the F.A.S.T. Team leader that the person(s) have been located and the actions being taken to remove them or if additional assistance is needed.

17.4.6 A MAYDAY report from any unit or the fireground will cause this plan to be activated.

SECTION 18.0

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SECTION 19.0

PROCEDURES FOR FIRE DISPATCH ON 800MHZ

19.1 When dispatching a company, at the end of the dispatch:

19.1.1 The dispatcher will assign the company or companies to a fire region. (Exp. Sta. 54 assist Sta. 37 on a Dwelling 123 Swamp Pike, Box 89-?? New Hanover Twp. Units operate on Fire Region 1.)

19.2 Upon arrival all units <u>WILL</u> switch to and operate off of the Fire Ground channel. The Fire Ground channels are located in the "C" bank of the radios.

19.3 Major Fires and Multi-Agency Incidents:

19.3.1 If there is a large-scale fire or multi-agency incident (i.e. Hazmat or a Terrorist attack) the Incident Commander can request an Event Channel. This is a countywide channel that is common in all agencies radios in the "B" bank. The Incident Commander should be asked if they want this monitored or not. It is highly recommended that you do have it monitored so you have direct communications with the dispatcher. This way, you do not have to switch between the Home Fire Region and the Event Channel.

19.3.2 Once an Event Channel is assigned, all units on that incident <u>WILL</u> switch to and operate off of that Event Channel.

19.3.3 The Event Channel that is assigned will coincide with the Home Region the incident is occurring. (I.e. if the incident is in the Region 1 area the incident will be put on Event Channel 1.)

19.3.4 If for any reason there is a need for additional event channels, Event Channels 7 through 10 will be used. This will keep the remaining Regions and their Event Channels available in case of another large-scale incident.

19.3.5 In the event of another incident in the same region, Event Channels 7 through 10 will be assigned.

19.4 Move-up/Standby:

19.4.1 When responding to another company to standby, communicate with EDS on your Home Fire Region. Once on-scene of the standby, switch to <u>that</u> company's Home Fire Region, if different.

19.5 Out of County Response:

    19.5.1 When responding outside of the County, communicate with EDS on your Home Fire Region, and then follow your company guidelines for out-of-county radio operations.

    19.5.2 Once on the scene, you may utilize the Fire Ground channels at your discretion.

19.6 Assistance From Out of County Agencies:

    19.6.1 Agencies responding into the county for mutual aid should consider purchasing digital 800mhz radios so they have communications with EDS and the agency they are assisting. Companies with digital 800mhz radios will follow the procedures as above.

    19.6.2 Companies that do not have a digital 800mhz radio low or high band communications so the mutual aid agencies have direct communications with the Incident Commander.

    19.6.3 If there is a large-scale incident that requires a large response from out of county agencies, the Incident Commander should consider requesting assistance from EDS to assist with the coordination of communications between all agencies.

19.7 Helicopter Landings:

    19.7.1 Communications for helicopter landings will be utilized on PSCL 1 or 2.

    19.7.2 PSCL is Public Safety Coordination Local, which is located in the "C" bank of the radios.

19.8 Pre – arranged Events and Drills:

    19.8.1 Any pre-arranged events or drills that involve multi-agencies can be assigned an Event Channel.

19.9 Fire Police Operations:

    19.9.1 Fire Police have 2 channels, Fire Police West and East. EDS under normal conditions will monitor these channels. If EDS goes to Priority Traffic these channels WILL NOT BE monitored.

    19.9.2 The Fire Police responding to and going on location will use these 2 channels. Once on location Fire Police WILL switch to and operate on Fire Police Local, which is in the "C" bank of the radios.

    19.9.3 Fire Police that are West of the Route 363 corridor will use Fire Police West and Fire Police that are East of Route 363 corridor will use Fire Police East.

OFFICER DESIGNATION PROCEDURE

20.1   Officers: Example:

Chief (only 1 per company)   Chief 7
Deputy   Deputy 7
                                Deputy 7-1
Assistant   Assistant 7
                                Assistant 7-1

Battalion
Captain   Captain 7
Lieutenant   Lieutenant 7
                                Lieutenant 7-1
                                Lieutenant 7-2
Safety   Safety 7
Engineer   Engineer 7
                                Engineer 7-1

You do not have to use every rank as listed. For example you may have a chief, three assistant chief's and one captain. The officer's list is to determine the rank of an officer in descending order.

20.2   Fire Marshal radio identifier will be FM and the municipal numerical designation. Example: FM-28

20.3   Borough or township chiefs is: borough/township name followed by five. Example: Bridgeport 5, Royersford 5.

SECTION 21.0

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

21.1   Under normal circumstance, 9-1-1 calls should be answered in less than 10 seconds.

21.2   Under normal circumstance, calls should be dispatched in less than 60 seconds from disconnect.

SECTION 22.0

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND FUEL SPILLS

PURPOSE:

This procedure is intended to assist dispatch center personnel in assessing and handling incidents involving hazardous materials. The procedure is also designed to ensure that the adequate equipment and appropriate personnel are dispatched to the emergency scene.

22.1   Receipt/Taking of Calls Involving the Potential of Hazardous Materials

      22.1.1 The communications center dispatcher receiving the initial call will attempt to obtain the following information from the person reporting the incident:

- Location (including nearest intersection)
- Call back number
- Incident type-accident, spills, leak, fire
- Material(s) involved/name and/or type
- Amount and size of containers involved
- Specific information about problem (size of spill, volume of leak, etc.)
- Dangerous properties of the material(s) involved

22.2   Initial dispatch of confirmed or potential incidents involving hazardous materials will be announced as Hazmat Incident.

22.3   Information, which is received by the dispatcher, will be relayed to the responding units. When the Fire/EMS dispatcher is advised by the local incident commander to have the County Hazmat Team.

- Dispatch zone Hazmat Team
- Notify DPS staff
- Advise on-call OEP and Special Operations staff of details.
- Notify other agencies, as requested

22.4   Hazmat Response Guidelines

      22.4.1 **Level 1 (Local)** – Incidents that are mitigated and controlled with local jurisdiction resources but may include a response from a County Hazmat Officer for consultation and advice. Request must be made through dispatch Center. Incidents usually include:

- Small amounts of hazardous materials that does not pose a life hazard in small quantities.
- Controlled Oil spills (not flammable) under 150 gallons that pose minimum environmental threats and have not entered a stream or drinking water source.
- Vehicle accidents with placarded vehicles that are not breached.

22.4.2   Level 11 (Tactical Box) – Incidents that are mitigated with local resources and supported by a County Hazmat Limited Response. Incidents usually include:

- Large oil or chemical spills that pose a threat to humans and the environment. Require spill control assistance.
- The discharge is over 150 gallons or toxic or flammable or radioactive.
- Major leak or spill of dangerous or unknown chemicals.
- Additional instrumentation required.
- Decon of civilian or first responders needed.
- Need large quantities of foam.

22.4.3   Level 111(Box) – Incidents that are beyond the resources of the local municipalities and require County, State and/or Federal intervention to mitigate the release or potential release. This incident will require one or more County Hazmat Divisions and additional County assets and resources as may be required. Incidents usually include:

- A WMD release.
- Large chemical or industrial plant release that endangers the public.
- A transportation emergency, such as a train derailment or large tanker or tractor with toxic, radioactive cargo.
- Any response that is so dangerous that a Level A Response is required to safely handle the product or incident.
- Uncontrolled radiological, biological or toxicological materials are present and may be released or may be unstable.
- Mass decon may be needed.
- Long term on-going large scale events requiring turn over of teams for rest periods.

22.5   Dispatch of certified HAZMAT team to the incident site to provide appropriate equipment and technical expertise should be considered when any of the following incident characteristics are present:

- The spill or leak involves, or has the potential to involve, gasoline, fuel oil, heating oil, propane or natural gas from the fuel supply tanks or lines involved, but also hazardous chemicals or substances (products) that were being transported by the vehicle(s) or stored onsite.
- The imminent potential danger of significant uncontained fire or explosion exists at the site of the incident.
- The potential exist for development of pockets of combustible/explosive vapors around the incident site due to the terrain and/or structures involved in or adjacent to the incident.
- Visible smoke or vapor cloud is reported around the incident site at a SARA site.
- Identification markings on the vehicle, cargo, or adjacent stored materials indicate the presence of reactive products, which may leak and react

violently with leaking or spilled fuel(s), air (oxygen etc.) and/or
suppressants (water or foam).

- The potential exists for fuel spill or leak to directly enter a waterway and diking or diverting the fuel spill or leak is beyond the capability of the first responders at the scene.
- The potential exists for the contamination of drinking water supplies.
- The safety of the first response personnel is jeopardized because of insufficient training, equipment, and personal protective equipment or supplies needed under a typical "Emergency Service Response".
- Uncontrolled radiological, biological or toxicological materials are present and may be released or are unstable.
- Additional instrumentation is required.

The circumstances of an incident, as described in this section concerning hazmat team response, must be evaluated by the officer in charge to determine if the incident is beyond the "fire department response" and necessitates response by a certified hazmat team. (source: PEMA circular #C93-1)

SECTION 23.0

PENNSYLVANIA FIRE INFORMATION REPORTING SYSTEM

Pennsylvania Fire Information Reporting System (PennFIRS) is the statewide information reporting system.

It is used to:

- o Complete reports on all incidents to which the department responds.
- o Provide that information to the Office State Fire Commissioner in accordance with the data collection protocols and transfer methods established for PennFIRS.
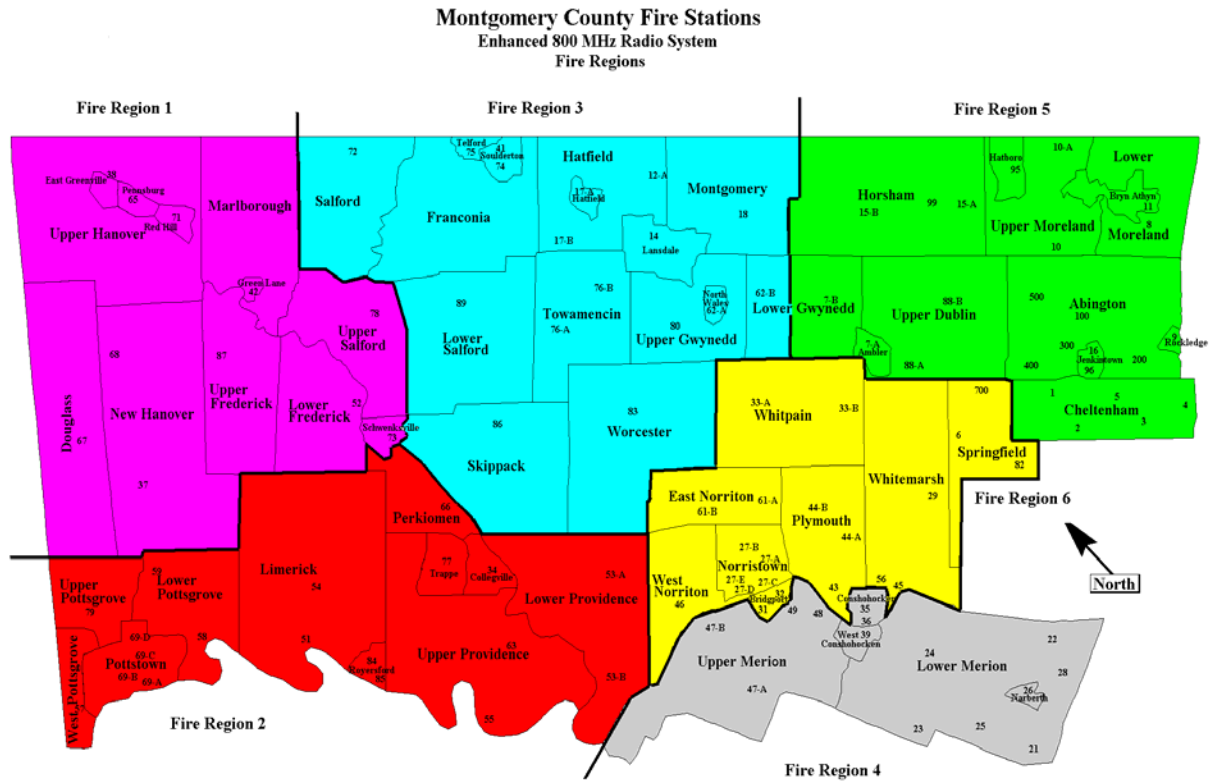
Procedures:

- Penn Firs reports should be sent to:

EOCREPORTS@MONTCOPA.ORG

- Direct Questions to Support Services Coordinator at 610-631-6500

FIRE REGIONS AND MAP

Montgomery County Fire Stations
Enhanced 800 MHz Radio System
Fire Regions

<div align="center">

SECTION 25.0

VEHICULAR REPEATERS

</div>

DPS recognizes that the safety of providers is of paramount concern, and that some locations present challenges to the radio network that cannot be overcome by the network infrastructure. The use of vehicular repeaters is permitted, provided that there use meets the conditions stipulated in this section.

25.1 All vehicular repeaters shall be installed, operated, and conform to all applicable FCC regulations and guidelines.

25.2 All vehicular repeater installations shall be verified for proper operation by Technical Services Division personnel *prior* to their use on any County network.

> **25.2.1** This verification process seeks only to insure that the operation of the vehicular repeater will not cause a safety risk to other users of the network, and *will not* be overtly technical or restrictive.

> **25.2.2** Each agency shall be provided with a "Letter of Authorization" which details the specific units that are permitted to operate vehicular repeaters.

25.3 To maintain effective interoperability, all vehicular repeaters shall operate *in-band* – specifically, vehicular repeaters operated on the 800 MHz public safety system shall be used with 800 MHz portable radio equipment.

25.4 Vehicular repeaters *must* be capable of allowing portable units to trigger the emergency activation function of the mobile equipment. Although the specific identification of the portable unit declaring the emergency will be unknown, the identification of the mobile unit shall be known to EDS to aid in more rapid identification.

> **25.4.1** The Chief Officer of each agency operating a vehicular repeater will be required to submit a signed "Acknowledgement of Liability" letter, stipulating that the agency understands the risks associated with operating a vehicular repeater, and assumes all liability for any outcomes resulting from their use.

25.5 DPS reserves the right to require the immediate de-activation of any vehicular repeater, at any time, when deemed necessary to insure the safety or security of field users.

Cross-band Repeaters
Cross-band repeaters represent risks to the integrity and security of the 800 MHz network that outweigh any potential benefits they may provide.

25.6 The use of cross-band repeaters on the 800 MHz public safety network is prohibited.

> **25.6.1** Cross-band repeaters include, but are not limited to, any fixed or mobile device capable of repeating signals received from disparate frequency ranges. These devices are typically VHF or UHF repeaters, operated from a fixed location, with

interconnections to equipment capable of transmitting on DPS frequencies.

25.7 The retransmission of received audio from the 800 MHz network is permitted, provided that a "Letter of Authorization" is received from DPS that details the talkgroups that will be retransmitted, and the location and frequencies from which the retransmissions will occur.

    25.7.1 In addition, Technical Services Personnel shall verify that the transmit capability of the equipment being used to provide the audio has been disabled *prior* to use on the 800 MHz network.

25.8 In the interest of field user safety, DPS *will* de-activate any unauthorized device on the 800 MHz network that is determined to be operating in conjunction with a cross-band repeater or similar device, or any device that is determined to be operating outside of the parameters authorized by DPS.

Properly authorized vehicular repeaters are permitted in accordance with section 25.1.

SECTION 26.0

ADVISORY BOARDS

26.1   The Montgomery County Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid Association maintains a radio committee to serve as a liaison to MCDPS – EDS and to provide advice regarding the operations of the Fire Communication System. This committee will also hear appeals regarding compliance to these procedures, and recommend corrective action to MCDPS-EDS.

26.2   A Joint Communications Advisory Committee (JCAC) comprised of three fire and three EMS and one Fire Marshal and appropriate County staff will meet periodically. The purpose of this committee is to provide a forum for developing and recommending standardized Policy and procedures relative to the deployment of appropriate resources in order to:

- Reduce time to dispatch
- Reduce errors
- Maximize efficiency
- Deploy units in a predictable & timely manner
- Facilitate inter-agency communications and coordination's
- Provide a platform for National Incident Management and system/ICS/unified Command communications procedure development.

NOTE: Meetings will be held on a regular basis with the ultimate goal of producing a single communications procedure manual. It is anticipated that member of the Police Radio Committee, Police Technology sub-committee, and Fire Marshal's will merge into this joint committee.

26.3   A Fire/EMS Joint Technical Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives of fire, EMS and Fire Marshals, will be appointed to assist the department with planning and implementing technological improvements relative to notifications, data transmissions, notifications and deployment of resources.

SECTION 27.0

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A   DPS Contact List
Attachment B   List of all Fire and EMS Agencies
Attachment C   Phonetic Alphabet
Attachment D   Municipal designations
Attachment E   Hour time clock
Attachment F   Definitions and Terminology

Department of Public Safety Contact List

Department of Public Safety
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ATTACHMENT C

PHONETIC ALPHABET

The following "international Phonetic Alphabet" will be used. Many letters in the English language sound alike. For example: B, C, D, E, V and Z could be confused with one another during a radio transmission. The Phonetic Alphabet consists of words in lieu of letters. They should be given as "A, Alpha"; "B, Bravo"; never "A as in Alpha" or "B as in Bravo".

(A)	ALPHA	(J)	JULIET	(S)	SIERRA
(B)	BRAVO	(K)	KILO	(T)	TANGO
(C)	CHARLIE	(L)	LIMA	(U)	UNIFORM
(D)	DELTA	(M)	MIKE	(V)	VICTOR
(E)	ECHO	(N)	NOVEMBER	(W)	WHISKEY
(F)	FOXTROT	(O)	OSCAR	(X)	X-RAY
(G)	GOLF	(P)	PAPA	(Y)	YANKEE
(H)	HOTEL	(Q)	QUEBEC	(Z)	ZULU
(I)	INDIA	(R)	ROMEO		

24 HOUR TIMES

The twenty-four hour clock system will be used to eliminate confusion resulting from the twelve hour system, which is duplicated in both A.M. and P.M. the expression of time using the 24-hour system consist of a four-digit number. The first two digits indicate the hour and the last two figures represent the minutes past the hour. The hours are numbered consecutively from midnight to midnight or "OO" to "24". The system is quite simple. All one has to do is add each hour past noon to twelve; thus 1:00 P.M. becomes 1300 (thirteen hundred), 2:00 P.M. becomes 1400 (fourteen hundred), etc. Some additional samples are as follows:

HOURS	ACTUAL TIME	HOURS	ACTUAL TIME
0100	1:00 AM	1300	1:00 PM
0200	2:00 AM	1400	2:00 PM
0300	3:00 AM	1500	3:00 PM
0400	4:00 AM	1600	4:00 PM
0500	5:00 AM	1700	5:00 PM
0600	6:00 AM	1800	6:00 PM
0700	7:00 AM	1900	7:00 PM
0800	8:00 AM	2000	8:00 PM
0900	9:00 AM	2100	9:00 PM
1000	10:00 AM	2200	10:00 PM
1100	11:00 AM	2300	11:00 PM
1200	12:00 AM	0000	12:00 PM

Examples of use:

00:01 HOURS = 1 minute past midnight (zero, zero, zero, zero)
02:00 HOURS = 2 A.M. (zero, two hundred hours)
12:00 HOURS = Noon (twelve hundred hours)
18:00 HOURS = 6 P.M. (eighteen hundred hours)

DEFINITIONS

WORKING FIRE: When a public safety official arrives on the scene of a structural fire and designates the incident as a working fire **or** all units assigned to the box will be committed to the incident. This will trigger cover assignments

APPLIANCE: Any appliance that can be easily disconnected and carried outside.

LOCAL BOX: Low hazard calls such as trash, woods, vehicles, accidents, dumpsters, automatic alarms, gas odors.

TACTICAL BOX: Moderate hazards such as one and two family dwellings, chimney, appliances, inside fumes, Hazmats, etc.

BOX: High hazard occupancies such as schools, nursing homes, high rises, apartments, industrial; major transportation incidents such as aircraft crashes, train derailment, etc. Companies can also designate response procedure for special boxes such as rescue (technical rescue), hazmat (level 3 Hazmats).

SYSTEM ALERT: A potential problem exists or may occur with some element of the dispatch system i.e. phone, radio towers, that may cause substantial disruption of the ability to deploy units. Or, a credible security threat for this geographic area exists. Companies should staff stations and operate on priority traffic.

MAJOR EMERGENCY BOX: A predetermined response deployed at the request of the IC to a major emergency, such as a building collapse, cave-in, explosion with entrapment, or wide-area storm disaster. Response is 4 heavy rescues units and other special units such as a Field Command Unit, Hazmat Team, Mass Decon, Mass Casualty or Rehab as requested or on the box cards.

ZERO-DEPLOYMENT CONDITION: A condition where EDS has recognized that a geographic area has insufficient resources to deploy for a fire, rescue or EMS emergency. This would probably occur during a large-scale fire incident or a widespread event such as a flood. EDS will deploy units as needed and notify all affected OIC's as radio traffic permits.

INCIDENT SUPPORT TEAM: A team of fire and emergency management personnel activated at the request of an IC to assist with the management of a major or prolonged event.

MARINE STAGING AREA: Pre-determined locations suitable for staging rescue boats and water rescue resources prior to storm related road closures. (See attachment _____for locations.

APPARATUS DESIGNATIONS: See list

OFFICER DESIGNATION: See section 20.0

ENGINE: Acceptable terminology. Reference the NFPA requirements for engine definition. Should comply with Chapter 3 of NFPA 1901.

TAC: Acceptable terminology. Small "Mini-Pumper" trucks for primary response.   Examples of equipment carried is listed in Section 10.7 of NFPA 1901.

PIPELINE: Minimum 2000ft. 5" diameter supply line, and 1500 GPM pump (extended Hose lay Engines).

TANKER: Acceptable terminology. Reference NFPA requirements. Should comply with Section 6.3 of NFPA 1901 PUMPER/TANKER – should be considered a TANKER.

FIELD: Acceptable terminology. Off road style firefighting equipment with water and pump.

SQUAD: Engine equipped primarily for vehicle extrication. Meets the operation level for Equipment as directed by Montgomery County Rescue Committee. Meets the engine category for pump and water as directed by the Common Terminology Committee. Primary use – engine or rescue.

RESCUE: Equipped to the operation level or higher as directed by the NFPA & State Health Department guidelines. Primary use – rescue. **NOTE**: A rescue does not pump a hydrant or lay line.

SPECIAL OP UNITS: Special equipment for technical responses. Including not limited to: trench, collapse, high angle, confined space.

AERIAL UNITS: (Should comply with Chapters 7,8 or 9 of NFPA 1901)
> LADDER – acceptable terminology. Primary climbable aerial main.
>
> TOWER – acceptable terminology. Elevated platform device.
>
> QUINT – 65 ft. aerial ladder or greater, 1000 GPM pump or greater (reference NFPA category).
>
> SNORKEL – acceptable terminology. Articulating platform device.
>
> SQUIRT – acceptable terminology. Elevated articulating master stream and telescopic master stream with or without escape ladders.

AIR – Acceptable terminology. Cascade units.

HAZMAT – Acceptable terminology. As designated by County.

CHEMICAL – Acceptable terminology. Specially designed for chemical extinguishing agents.

MARINE – Acceptable terminology. Surface water rescue units.

DIVE – Acceptable terminology. Sub-surface water rescue units.

UTILITY - Acceptable terminology. All apparatus not specifically categorized.

SPECIAL SERVICE - Acceptable terminology. Support equipment., spill control units, decon units.

CANTEEN - Food and comfort units.

FIRE MARSHAL – Appointed municipal official charged with the prevention and investigation of fires and explosions, enforcement of laws, codes and regulations related to fire protection. Will be identified by numerical designation of municipality (FM-52)

FIRE POLICE – Fire police units of fire companies.

CAR – Car when not used by Command Officer

TRAFFIC – Fire Police vehicles

TERMINOLOGY

F.A.S.T. – Any unit capable of providing rapid intervention to rescue lost or trapped firefighters.

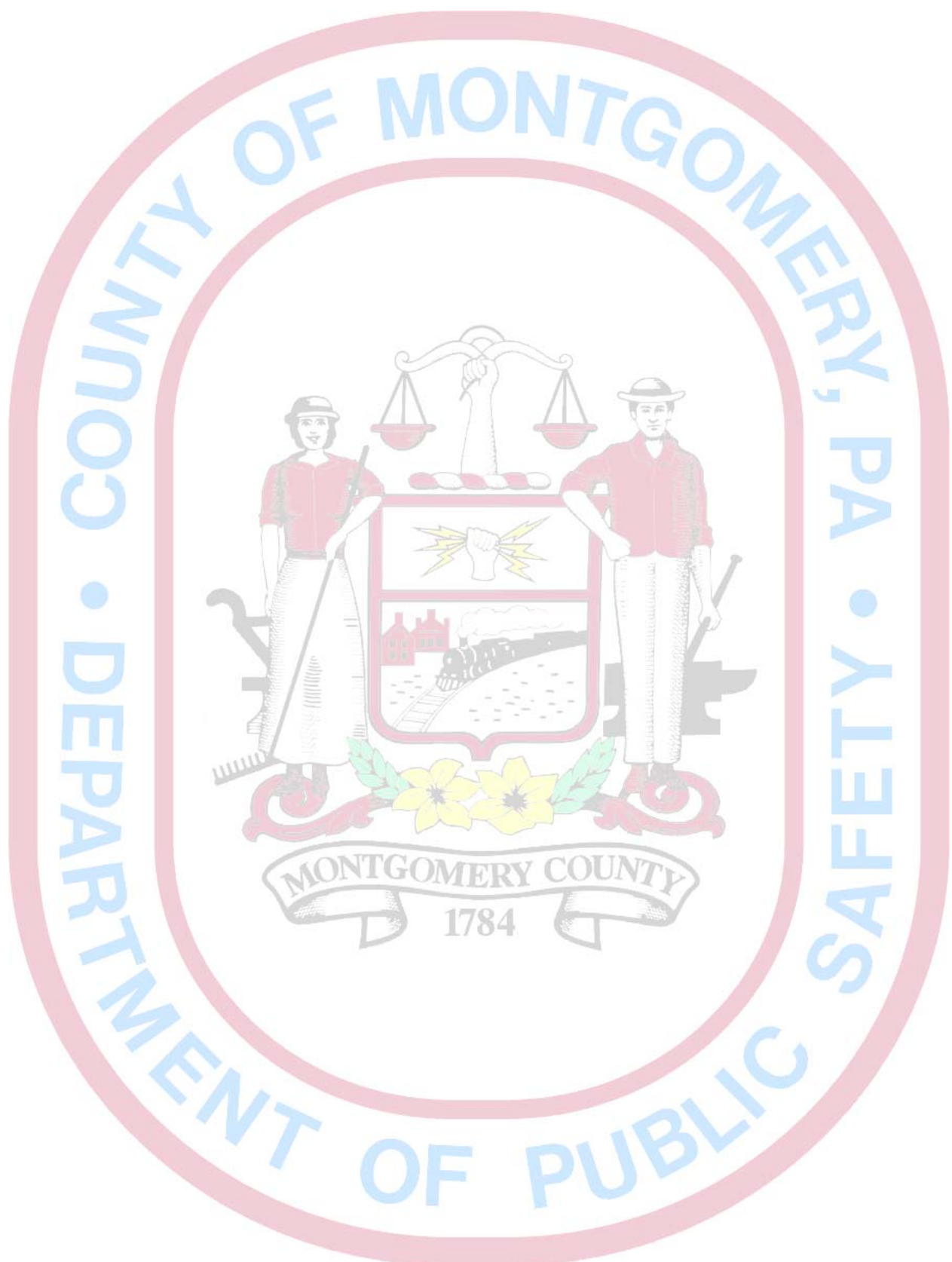|	
Advise	Give message to
Available	Apparatus or vehicle is in-service and ready to respond to an additional assignment.
_____Command	Incident Commander
Cover/Cover Up	Apparatus or vehicle is being transferred to another location or fill-in another station.
Disregard	Cancel last message
E.T.A.	Estimate time of arrival
Proceed	You have been given clearance to transmit your message
Investigating	No fire or smoke visible from initiating unit's position
MAYDAY	Fire fighter or crew is in a life-threatening situation. Takes priority over all other messages.
On-Location	Apparatus or vehicle has arrived at the location of the emergency.
On-radio	Apparatus or vehicle is capable of being contacted by radio
Off-radio	Apparatus or vehicle is not capable of being contacted by radio.
P.A.R	Personnel Accountability Report
Prepare to copy	Transmitted first to give apparatus or individuals who are going to receive an additional alarm response a forewarning that their next message will be an emergency alarm dispatch.
Priority	When transmitted, means that the following message is an emergency and must have immediate attention. All apparatus and units will standby until the message is acknowledged.
Recall	All responding apparatus return to station
OK	Message received and understood
Reduced Speed	All responding apparatus will turn emergency warning lights and sirens off and proceed into the emergency scene as a normal vehicle.

Relocate	Apparatus covering more than one area from a Central location.
Responding	Apparatus or vehicle is enroute to assigned location of emergency as dispatched.
Returning	Apparatus or vehicle is returning to station but not available to respond to an additional assignment.
Repeat	Repeat your last message
F.A.S.T.	Firefighter Assist & Search Team. Responsible for the rescue of any firefighters should they become entrapped.
Sector	Specified area or task on the fire ground
Staging	Apparatus to remain uncommitted and not to respond directly into the scene. Level 1 staging applies to initial responding companies based on pre-assigned SOG's. Level 2 staging refers to additional alarm companies and is to a designated area.
Stand-By	Stop transmitting and wait for further instructions
Under Control	Emergency situation is under control
Verify	Verify an entire message and correct if necessary
Take-up	Stated apparatus and/or companies on the scene can shutdown and wrap up
Task Force	Two or more units operating as a specialized unit or for a specific purpose.

It is understood that all terminologies are not covered in this section and some may differ from those recommended. Therefore, any message directed to the county dispatcher for rebroadcast to incoming apparatus will be repeated as given to the dispatcher.

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